

2024 All-State Solos – tenor trombone

Overall Advice:

Establish a good daily warm-up and routine, if you don't already have one. If you need one, I have a warm-up packet that I'll send to you. Email me at: mwilkinson@mozart.sc.edu, let me know your name and what school you attend, and ask for it. Every trombonist has a slightly different way of going about their routine, but most routines have these commonalities: long tones, lip slurs, and tonguing. I've addressed each a little bit, below.

Long tones: play relaxed and non-metered long tones every day. Focus on *your sound*. Have a sound in mind that you want to emulate (from your teacher, a recording, a trombone performance you attended, etc...), and chase that sound, every day. I like to think of long tones as the most relaxing thing I do, all day, and I believe that *your sound* is the most important thing about you, as a musician. Without a beautiful core sound, it is difficult to do much else. I like to play my Remington series with a floated first note (only air to start the note, no tongue), and a relaxed glissando to the next note (then, breathe before the next two notes). I also play slow scales, using as little tongue as possible, while playing legato or glissed.

Lip slurs: play these to develop flexibility on your instrument, learning to navigate the harmonic series, without using your tongue. Start with easy slurs (4th-line F down to low Bb, and then back up), and work your way up to adding more partials and playing faster (while staying relaxed). Always play these slowly to start. A relaxed accuracy is key in the beginning, but even after you feel you have more control, still keep things as tension-free as possible. If you have an F-attachment, try playing these also down through your trigger positions.

Tonguing: after you have gotten some air moving through the instrument while playing long tones and lip slurs, *then* work on tonguing, while keeping the *same sound* that you've been producing, previously. Don't allow the notes in this part of your routine to not sound as good as everything else. Practice tonguing repeated notes (static, or non-moving slide), and also practice tonguing moving notes (dynamic, or moving slide). Make sure to move your slide quickly between notes, avoiding any unnecessary glissandos/portamento (while at the same time making sure that your slide arm stays as relaxed as possible). Scales are a great thing to practice here, varying your articulations.

Finally, when learning these etudes, take the time to practice *slowly* and *accurately*. Make sure that you are being attentive to *every detail* in the music, first. Use a music dictionary to make sure that you know and fully understand each musical term contained in these solos (I like the Wotton Dictionary of Music app).

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Junior Trombone: Audition Solo 1A, Animato

-Practice the dynamic and articulation contrasts - the composer is very specific about these things. Practice with a metronome, and be as exact in your performance details as possible, staying within the "Animato" marking. This solo is mostly all diatonic to the Bb scale. Practice that scale (the all-state pattern and any other patterns that you've learned from your band teacher, private lessons teacher, my warm-up packet, etc...) – this will be good "cross-training" for learning and performing this solo.

-Make sure that there is a noticeable contrast between your tonguing in m.1 & 2 and the legato tongued/slurred *cantabile* phrase in m.3 & 4...and then back to tongued/more articulate in m.5 & 6. Be confident and precise with the dotted rhythm in m.6, and crescendo through it to the end of the phrase.

-In m.7, be solid in your pulse, giving the middle C a full 2 beats. It would be easy to rush after the shorter rhythms in the previous measures, but resist! Also, be *forte*, but not too loud. Play with a full sound, and contrast the dynamic you started with in m.1.

-m.9 and 10: make sure your *mp* is a big contrast to the *forte* from two measures prior, and work to make the slurred notes, staccato note (think: *space*, not excessively *short*), and un-marked note on beat three clear in your articulation and phrasing.

-m. 15 should be the high point of the etude, energy and dynamic-wise. Resist the urge to crescendo through the F in m. 16, and instead *decrescendo* and *relax* the dynamic intensity into m.17.

-“a ending”: adjust the high F (6th partial) downward, to avoid being sharp

-“b ending”: contrast the *staccato* with the *tenuto* notes in the first two measures, and be sure to *crescendo* through to the *con brio* measure. In the last phrase, don’t be sharp on 5th position F#. Play the last two octave Bb’s full, accented, and *forte*, but be careful not to let your tone spread.

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*Clinic Trombone: Audition Solo 2A, Allegretto energico

-Practice the dynamic and articulation contrasts - the composer is very specific about these things. Practice with a metronome, and be as exact in your performance details as possible, staying within the “Allegretto energico” marking. Practice your G Harmonic Minor scale – the etude mainly stays there (or in Ascending Melodic Minor, at the very end). Practice various scale patterns in the three main articulations that you want to differentiate between (this solo has a few distinct style switches): light *staccato* (*space*, not excessively *short notes*), *con forza* (for the endings: full, but still with a controlled and centered tone), *cantabile* (*flowing* and beautifully-connected notes).

-For the passages beginning with one eighth note followed by two 16ths, be articulate and precise in your note placement, note length, and slide technique (no glissando, or portamento, here!). Stay true to *Allegretto energico*, especially the “energetic” part.

-In m.25-30, make sure to differentiate between the notes marked *staccato* and the notes marked *tenuto*, and keep both at the *p* dynamic. If you think of *staccato* as meaning “space between the notes”, rather than “short notes”, you may find more musical success here, especially with the low G’s (the lower you play on the trombone, the less you can get away with playing really short notes).

-a ending - be careful with the markings in m. 37: it is tricky to accent the first note, play legato while ascending one half-step, not accent that note, but also *crescendo*, and then *decrescendo* while playing *staccato* (whew!). Keep your tone steady and full on the echo of m.39 in m.40, and then don’t overdo it in m.41 (be *forte*, full, loud, but don’t hurt the person listening to your audition!). I believe the last two notes could be the determining factor for many people’s auditions: play *forte* and accented in the mid-upper register and then immediately play *mp*, connecting the last two notes, in the lower register (playing the low G as a full quarter note, and with beautiful tone).

-b ending – similar issues here to the aforementioned comments on the a ending. I would focus on/practice playing a strong high G, right on beat 2 (don’t come in early!), and be careful to not play too loud here (the dynamic is technically still *mf*).

-The a and b endings are obviously different at the end, but each is a variation of the other, and very similar. Make sure to practice these separately and often enough in order to be solid on each and not confuse them, in the audition.

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*Senior Trombone: Audition Solo 3A, Brillante / meno mosso / Tempo primo

-Practice the dynamic, articulation, and rhythmic contrasts - the composer is very specific about these things. Practice with a metronome, and be as exact in your performance details as possible, staying within the “Brillante” marking at the beginning (and for both of the endings) and *meno mosso* for the middle section. Much of the beginning and end are diatonic to the F major scale. Practice that scale (the all-state pattern and any other patterns that you’ve learned from your band teacher, private lessons teacher, my warm-up packet, etc...) – this will be good “cross-training” for learning and performing this solo, not letting the “technical” part of it hold back your audition. Practice with varied articulations, like the patterns in m.3 and 24.

-At the beginning, find a full *forte* sound, but be careful to not play too loud, taking away from the “Brillante” marking. Be clear in your articulation and scale patterns, and differentiate between each few bars’ dynamics, articulation, and rhythm, as all of those details change often/quickly.

-Plan out your breathing carefully, and as to not interrupt the phrasing in m.7-12.

-Be exact in your placement of the low Db in m.12 – don’t let a sharp 5th position define your audition.

-“Quarter note = 92” isn’t much slower than “100” – be careful to not drag in the *meno mosso* section. Practice both the fast and slower sections with a metronome, and practice switching back-and-forth between these two tempos with and then without a metronome (since you won’t be able to use one during your audition...). For this middle section, practice for smooth and clean ascending minor arpeggios, without too much crescendo on either.

-In both the a and b endings, make sure that the high F (6th partial) isn’t sharp, and that none of these higher notes get edgy, tone-wise. Count carefully, articulate exactly as notated, and plant the last four notes confidently, all the way down to a solid and full low F.